

November 15th, 2019

Dear Members of the Burbank City Council,

In February 2013, the City of Burbank adopted the Burbank 2035 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan (GGRP) in response to the science of climate change. Burbank joined with the rest of California to take action and set many ambitious goals that addressed the urgency of the moment as we understood it at that time. On October 28th, 2019, Members of the Sustainability Commission attended the GGRP Update Presentation at the Planning Board and we are compelled to share some thoughts in anticipation of the GGRP Update Presentation to the City Council on November 19th, 2019. One issue in particular is the subject of this letter.

The 2013 GGRP required the City of Burbank to hire a full-time Sustainability Coordinator (at the time, funded via the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, now long since exhausted). The Community Development Department, Public Works Department, and City Manager were tasked with creating this position. This individual was to oversee and monitor implementation of the GGRP, with responsibilities including:

1. Creating annual reports on the progress of GGRP action items;
2. Updating the community-wide efficiency emissions inventory every 3-5 years;
3. Maintaining contact with BWP to ensure energy and water consumption data is readily available for future inventory updates;
4. Identifying new statewide efficiency legislation or regulations to include in future GGRP updates; and
5. Promoting sustainability messaging throughout all City departments.

Nearly seven years later, these commitments have not been met because the Sustainability Coordinator position was never created. Failure to create and fill that position has resulted in Burbank being out of compliance with current statewide standards, which have been updated multiple times since 2013 (eg. AB 1826, AB 876 and SB 1383). Ethics and lost opportunity cost aside, this non-compliance leaves Burbank vulnerable to potential penalties or future litigation costs. It also raises questions about the environmental impacts of current and proposed development, as those projects have been structured around a set of guidelines that are out of date and unenforced.

From a financial standpoint, lack of a Sustainability Coordinator has prevented Burbank from pursuing much needed and available grant funding for sustainability measures. For example:

- Since 2013, California Climate Investments has awarded more than \$11 billion in Cap-and-Trade funding to GHG emissions reduction projects benefiting communities statewide (including \$914 million just between December 2018 and May 2019). See more info at <http://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/about-cci>); and
- The California Water Resources Board has funding available now (\$47 million in a current grant application window, and \$88 million opening in early 2020) under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program (funded by Proposition 68 and Proposition 1) for projects that address drought and groundwater investments. See more info at <https://water.ca.gov/Work-With-Us/Grants-And-Loans/Sustainable-Groundwater>).

It was encouraging to see that Table 1 of the Update on the 2013 GGRP summarized progress in various areas, and we are very much in agreement with the recommendation that was given by Mr. Ramirez to the Planning Board: without question, Burbank's GGRP needs to be updated. But we strongly disagree with the assertion that creating the Sustainability Coordinator position is a waste of money. There are still several 2020 targets yet to be met (e.g. smart grid integration, shade tree initiative, bicycle infrastructure, recycle water use, waste reduction), and what about the additional targets that an updated GGRP will undoubtedly outline? How many more consulting firms do we need to hire to do the work of one person? And although we should be proud of the progress we've made since 2013's GGRP, how much additional progress could have been achieved if we had a member of Burbank City Staff whose singular focus was its execution?

Our understanding of the effects of climate change has grown far more extensive and the urgency is far greater than we realized. The science is clear and unflinchingly bleak – but you already know that. This Council has demonstrated that it understands the gravity of the environmental crisis we are in. But without the voice of a Sustainability Coordinator in Burbank's day to day operating staff, the bold creative steps that we could be taking as a City – steps that many other comparable cities such as Costa Mesa and Long Beach are taking - aren't even being explored here. It's nobody's job, so it's not being done.

If we continue to neglect the position that the City itself identified as essential back in 2013, an updated GGRP is nearly moot. We will likely find ourselves in the exact same situation in a few years – out of compliance and out of step. After all the time, money, and brainpower that created our current GGRP, let's not make the same mistake again. Let's listen to our own advice. Now that the City hiring freeze has ended, we ask that you immediately set an agenda item to establish a timeline to create and fill this position. We have attached the key points of a potential job description, which can hopefully provide a starting point for this urgent matter. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further at your earliest opportunity.

Thank you for considering, and acting on, our recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'LZ' or a similar stylized representation of the name Limor Zimskind.

Limor Zimskind, Chair & Members of the Sustainable Burbank Commission

City of Burbank Sustainability Coordinator

Job Description Key Points

Burbank's Sustainability Coordinator will play a lead role in updating and implementing the City of Burbank's Climate Action Plan/GGRP, as well as spearheading an overall expansion of Burbank's sustainability commitments and execution. More specifically, this position will:

1. Develop, implement, coordinate and evaluate environmental and sustainability programs and projects in areas including energy, water, green building, waste, transportation, equity and climate change adaptation.
2. Collaborate and provide information and assistance to City staff, businesses and the community on sustainability program implementation including related policies and procedures.
3. Track and report on performance metrics related to sustainability programs/projects; interpret and analyze corresponding statistical information.
4. Research potential outside funding sources for local programs and prepare grant applications with accompanying reports as necessary.
5. Promote city programs by engaging the community and making presentations about sustainability to boards, commissions, businesses and neighborhood groups.
6. Analyze and keep abreast of applicable laws, rules, regulations, trends and innovations so that Burbank can timely comply with its sustainability commitments.